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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE AT ALL TIMES

2017-2018 SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK



Effective September 8, 2017

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA

A branch of Somerset County YMCA

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 [Facebook.com/SomersetHillsYMCA](https://www.facebook.com/SomersetHillsYMCA)

 [Twitter.com/shymca](https://twitter.com/shymca)

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening the community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. At Somerset County YMCA, we believe everyone, regardless of age, income or background, should have the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. For information about Somerset County YMCA and financial assistance, visit us at www.somersetcountyyymca.org.

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WELCOME TO THE SOMERSET HILLS YMCA SWIM TEAM FAMILY!

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team has a year-round program with two practice locations during the school year (Somerset Hills YMCA and The Pingry School) and two practice locations during the summer (Somerset Hills YMCA and Pleasant Valley Pool).

The Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team has a rich history of success at both the state and national levels. What makes our swim program so special is the commitment to excellence in and out of the pool. Our dedicated and experienced professional staff emphasizes the highest level of dedication and effort in the pool, character development, focus on academic success, and instilling life skills that are vital to the pursuit of excellence throughout the rest of our athletes' lives. Fostering a team-first environment while demonstrating the YMCA's core values and dedication to one's goals is the foundation of the success of Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team.

Please read through this entire handbook carefully, as all athletes and families will be accountable for all of the policies and procedures outlined in the pages below. Thank you for choosing Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team!

Lori Riegler
Director of Competitive Aquatics

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team's Mission

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team's mission is to create a culture of excellence where achievement is inevitable by focusing our efforts towards:

1. team success at NJ YMCA 12 & under States, NJ YMCA 12 & over States, NJ Swim Junior Olympics, YMCA Nationals and US National Championships (Futures, Juniors, Seniors).
2. establishing a program where athletes are taught to become confident and energetic competitors with superior stroke mechanics, training and racing habits, and overall athletic fitness.
3. creating a fun, team-oriented environment while maintaining the integrity of the YMCA's core values and beliefs.

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team program was developed to provide opportunities for both the serious athlete with high goals and the recreational swimmer who simply wants to enjoy exercise and teamwork. The club is focused on developing and promoting positive character traits in addition to proper stroke mechanics, improvement and conditioning. Our hope is to reach all athletes, regardless of age or ability, and touch lives in a way that is meaningful and enjoyable.

Financial Assistance

Thanks to funds raised through our Annual Campaign, we are able to ensure Y programs are accessible to everyone. To apply for our confidential Financial Assistance Program, please contact Beatriz Dominguez at **908 766 7898 x346** or visit our website at www.somersetcountyyymca.org/fa.

PRACTICE GROUP INFORMATION

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team has five different practice groups within the program, organized by age.

1. **Ages 8 and under:** Practice is offered four days per week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. It is recommended that they attend three practices per week.
2. **Ages 9-10:** Practice is offered five days per week, Monday through Friday. It is recommended that they attend three to four practices per week.
3. **Ages 11-12:** Practice is offered six days per week, Monday through Friday and Sunday. It is recommended that they attend four to five practices per week.
4. **Senior I, ages 13-18:** Practice is offered six days a week, Monday through Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. It is recommended that they attend five practices per week.
5. **Senior II, ages 13 and over:** Practice is offered six days per week, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There are three morning sessions offered as well, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. It is recommended that they attend at least six practices a week.

If an athlete gets injured or is sick for an extended period of time, it would be extremely helpful to coaches if parents would send an email to their athlete's coach or the head coach.

SEASON AND MEET INFORMATION

There are two types of swim meets in which Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team participates throughout the season: dual meets and invitationals. Dual meets are meets with just two teams. Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team will have a dual meet schedule that will begin in late October and run through the middle of December. These dual meets are further divided by gender, so there will be three girls' teams and two boys' teams. These meets are scheduled on Saturdays and last approximately two hours. All members of Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team are required to attend at least two dual meets throughout the season.

The other type of meet is an invitational. Invitationals typically have multiple teams in attendance and are usually two to three days long. Each day is divided into age groups and these sessions generally last about three to four hours. Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team generally participates in one invitational each month from October through December and at least two invitationals each month from January through March. Some of these invitationals are championship in nature and will have a prelim/final format for athletes ages 13 and over. At these meets, the top 16 athletes in each event ages 13-14 and ages 15-18 qualify to swim again in the evening. These athletes will be required to attend finals and are responsible for checking results (either posted at the facility or via Meet Mobile) before leaving their session.

Championship meets will begin in February. These meets include the following: ages 8 and under Champs, Bronze Champs (ages 9 and over), Silver Champs (ages 9 and over), ages 12 and under States, ages 13 and over States, ages 13 and over Silver/Bronze Champs, Junior Olympics (ages 14 and under), and YMCA Nationals (ages 12 and over). All athletes must have competed in at least three YMCA meets in order to compete in YMCA championship meets.

TEAM SUIT POLICY

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team has a swimsuit policy. Team suits are highly encouraged for all meets. Tech suits will be prohibited at all regular-season meets for every age group. Below are the approved meets and age groups where tech suits may be worn:

Ages 11-12: Season-ending championship meet only
Ages 13 and over: Holiday Classic/Eastfields and season-ending championship meets only

SWIM TEAM PARENTS ORGANIZATION

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team Parents Organization (STPO) is comprised of volunteer parents of our team athletes. STPO supports the athletes and coaches, the local and national YMCA and the NJ swimming community. They do this in a variety of ways: running meets; raising funds; organizing and subsidizing social events; coordinating volunteers; purchasing and maintaining meets, pool and training equipment; managing other administrative support for the team.

The STPO is not involved in coaching, determining practice groups, deciding what meets the team attends, or monitoring interactions between coaches and swimmers at practices and meets.

Our motto is that swimmers swim, coaches coach, parents cheer and volunteer!

PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT GUIDELINES

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team and its coaching staff, like all other swim teams, rely on parent involvement to be successful. Parents support the swimmers, coaching staff and the local swimming community by volunteering at meets, organizing social events, fundraising, etc. If all families volunteer, the burden can be shared and not fall on a few overextended parents. Outlined below is a description of the volunteer commitment required by parents for being a part of Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team.

Dual Meets: One parent from each family will volunteer for at least three dual meets for each team on which he or she has a swimmer(s).

- The VP for each dual team will send out a Call for Volunteers. Sign-up in a timely manner for the job and session you would like. Table Operators and Officials will be scheduled by their respective Coordinators.
- If your swimmer becomes sick or injured, you must notify your team's VP and expect to make up the assignment at a future dual meet.
- Volunteering will be reported, recorded and used for determining future timing assignments.

Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team-Hosted Invitational Meets: One parent will work all Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team-hosted meets that his or her swimmer(s) attends. Families without a swimmer(s) in these meets are not required to volunteer (but are more than welcome to do so).

- The Somerset Hills YMCA Volunteer Coordinator will email a Call for Volunteers grid. Sign-up for the job and session you would like. Table Operators will be scheduled by their Coordinator. Officials will sign-up on the grid.
- If jobs or sessions are not filled two days prior to the meet, the Somerset Hills YMCA Volunteer Coordinator may fill the openings with families who have yet to volunteer.

- Parents with multiple swimmers in one session do not have to sign up for multiple jobs during that session. If they have multiple swimmers in multiple sessions, they may be asked to work multiple sessions if there is a need.
- Volunteering will be reported, recorded and used for determining future family invitational meet timing assignments.
- Older swimmers (junior volunteers) are encouraged to support the team by working at Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team-hosted meets, but they do not fulfill their families' volunteer obligations.

Ages 8 and Under Championships: One parent will work one shift, regardless of their swimmer's age(s) or meet attendance. The meet will be held the weekend of February 3-4, 2018.

- Swim Team Volunteer Coordinator will email a Call for Volunteers grid. Sign-up on the grid for the job and session you would like. Table Operators will be scheduled by their Coordinator. Officials will sign-up on the grid.
- If jobs or sessions are not filled two days prior to the meet, the Swim Team Volunteer Coordinator may fill the openings with families who have yet to volunteer.
- Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team families who do not have a parent(s) volunteer at the 8 and under Championships will be fined \$100.00 regardless of the reason. The fine will be added to the swimmer's Team Unify account and may prevent the swimmer(s) from entering future meets unless paid off in a timely manner.
- Volunteering will be reported, recorded and used for determining future family timing assignments.
- Older swimmers (junior volunteers) are encouraged to support the team by working at meets but that does not fulfill their families' volunteer obligations.

Non Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team-Hosted Invitational Meets: One parent should be available to time at all invitational meets your swimmer attends, including finals.

- Host Team will send out our timing assignments prior to the meet.
- Invitational Meet Timer Coordinator will divide the timing assignment between parents of swimmers entered in the meet based on their past volunteer participation and their swimmers' events.
- Prior to making the assignments, the Invitational Meet Coordinator will give parents an opportunity to indicate if their swimmer(s) is not attending the meet or if the parent(s) is an Official who plans to work the meet.
- Timing assignments will be emailed to families with swimmers entered in the meet. Parents receiving an assignment must provide their cell numbers in the Google doc by the date noted. Failure to provide this information will result in their swimmer being scratched from the meet by the coaches, and fines will be given to no-shows.
- In the event parents can no longer fulfill their assignment (whether due to a change in their swimmer's schedule or the parents own availability), they are responsible for finding a replacement. The Head Timer and the Invitational Meet Coordinator can be notified by indicating the replacement on the Google doc. Once the assignments are sent out, the Invitational Meet Coordinator should not be contacted.

- Assigned timers should check in by cell or in-person with the Head Timer, and stay until the end of shift whether or not their swimmer has completed his or her events for that day.
- Head Timers will check in Somerset Hills YMCA timers for that session, bring Somerset Hills YMCA watches if needed, find replacements for no-shows, and report back to the Invitational Meet Coordinator regarding the timers who worked and those who were no-shows.
- Non Somerset Hills YMCA-hosted invitational timers must be adults. Swimmers or siblings under 18 years of age cannot take their parents' timer shifts at these meets.
- If your swimmer is sick or injured and unable to attend the day of the meet, notify the Head Timer and expect to receive an assignment at the next meet your swimmer attends.
- Families with multiple swimmers or with swimmers who attend multiple meets, will be asked to time more frequently than those with one swimmer or those with swimmers who attend fewer meets.
- Officials working non Somerset Hills YMCA-hosted meets are asked to notify the Invitational Meet Coordinator of their intention in a timely manner and report their subsequent officiating to the Officials Coordinator for tracking. Officials who work non Somerset Hills YMCA-hosted invitational meets will receive twice the volunteer credit of parents timing a shift.

If a missed timing assignment occurs and you have not found a replacement or notified the Head Timer, the following actions will be taken:

- First Infraction: \$50 fine
- Second Infraction: \$75 fine
- Third Infraction: \$100 fine
- Fourth Infraction: Suspension of meet privileges

Fines will be added to your swimmer's Team Unify account and may prevent him or her from entering future meets unless fines are paid in a timely manner.

- If a family has a swimmer competing in a Finals session and refuses or misses a timing assignment during that session, their swimmer will be scratched from the session by the coach and/or fines will be imposed according to the above schedule.

Committees: one parent is expected to volunteer for at least one committee.

- Committees include team social events, fundraising or meet execution; some are for a set time frame while others are for the whole season.
- Some Committees require additional training.
- Committee sign-ups will be distributed in September.

TEAM UNIFY

The Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team database is managed through a software system called Team Unify. This system keeps track of swimmers' events and times, manages meet entries, and maintains family accounts for swim team financial obligations such as Meet Entry fees, STPO dues, USA Swimming registrations, social events, etc. YMCA fees (membership, swim team program fees) are managed outside of Team Unify through the YMCA's accounting system.

To enable payments through Team Unify, families will be asked to either register a credit card for monthly payments or carry an escrow of \$50 per swimmer. Each month, any outstanding balance in a family's Team Unify account will be charged to a credit card, or the family will need to send payment by check.

At the start of each new season, all members will be required to log in to their account to register their athletes in the team database. Keeping account information, such as email addresses, up-to-date is important. Most of the communications from coaches and the STPO will be through emails using the addresses listed in each family's Team Unify account. During the swim season, Team Unify is the tool used for swimmers to declare their intention to be entered in an upcoming swim meet. It is the responsibility of the parents to indicate that intention prior to the stated deadline. Coaches will then work with the swimmers in selecting events. Swimmers who have not stated their intention by the deadline will not be entered in the meet. Coaches will not have the capability of adding late swimmers to our teams' entries. Meets fill up quickly and sometimes there is a quick turnaround to get the teams' entries submitted. Additionally, families are responsible for the meet entry fees associated with their entries once the deadline passes, whether or not their swimmer(s) compete in those event.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of conduct is effective from the date signed through the last qualified meet of the season as a Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team athlete.

Purpose

To provide for the best possible individual, team and program which promotes the sport of swimming, helps to develop the athletic ability and character of the individual swimmers, and helps maintain the Swim Team's reputation and standing as a "world class" program.

Application

The entire contents of the **Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures** shall apply to any activity or function that is associated with Swim Team, including but not limited to: practices, meets team trips, team or individual practice group outings, team functions, etc. This policy also addresses illegal behavior involving law enforcement by swim team members occurring outside the team activities. The **Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures** applies to and must be read, agreed to and signed by each athlete and parent/guardian in order to register for and participate in Swim Team programs.

General Policies

All members and extensions of the team, including coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and athletes, are expected to protect and help improve the excellent reputation that the Swim Team has earned throughout the state. Members of the Swim Team must at all times follow appropriate Code of Conduct policies that include the following:

1. I will behave in such a way that my actions reflect positively on myself and the Swim Team at all team practices, meets, team trips, team or individual group outings and any team function.
2. I will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, fellow competitors, parents and the general public in attendance at practices, meets or team functions.
3. I will, at all times, follow the directions of the coaching staff during practice, meets, and other team activities.
4. I will not steal or borrow without permission any article that does not belong to me, such as clothing, jewelry, electronics, money or any other items regardless of value.
5. I will respect the property of Somerset County YMCA and any other facility the team may visit or use. I will not tamper with or cause damage to any such facility.
6. I will promote positive team spirit and morale, which includes being humble in victory and courageous in defeat. I will deal justly, kindly and impartially with all fellow team members.
7. I will not interfere with the productivity of another swimmers practice, meet or preparation for a practice or meet at any time. I understand this includes teammates and/or opposing swimmers.
8. I will obey all applicable pool safety rules.
9. I will refrain from verbal or physical abuse/assault or inappropriate touching behavior towards other teammates, coaches, officials, or fellow competitors.
10. I will never endanger the safety of another participant, coach or administrator.
11. I will never leave the supervision of the coaching staff without their direct approval.
12. I will make every effort to come to practice on time or notify my practice group coach if I will be late.

13. I will make every effort to wear designated team suit, cap, and other clothing as prescribed by the coaches.
14. I will avoid use of any substances acknowledged on USA Swimming's banned substance list (<http://www.usada.org/wp-content/uploads/wada-2016-prohibited-list-en.pdf>).
15. I will maintain compliance with Swim Team policies, including:
 - a. Social Media Policy
 - b. Anti-Bullying Policy
 - c. Electronic Communication Policy

Prohibited Behavior at Team Trips & Events

1. Use of alcoholic beverages
2. Use of illegal drugs or improper use of prescription medications
3. Smoking or other use of tobacco products
4. Destructive behavior
5. Inappropriate or unruly behavior, including failure to adhere to team standards and the Code of Conduct

PROCEDURES

Administration

The Code of Conduct, Policies and Procedures will be governed by the Swim Team Coaching Staff.

1. The Swim Team coaching staff will enforce the Code of Conduct policies and are empowered to make final judgment on any infraction that they witness.
2. Infractions reported to the Swim Team coaching staff will be reviewed according to the appropriate procedures listed below.
3. All decisions made by the Swim Team coaching staff are final and not open to appeals.

Procedure for Reporting an Infraction

1. Parent or guardian reports the infraction to a member of the coaching staff.
2. If the report is made to one of the assistant coaches, that particular coach will bring it to the attention of the Head Coach or Head Age Group Coach.
3. The person reporting the infraction must have directly witnessed the incident or be the parent/guardian of a person involved.
4. All reports should be made as soon as possible, preferably within 72 hours of when the incident took place.
5. Upon receiving the report, the coach will begin an investigation in a fair and expeditious manner. This will include contacting all parties involved and arranging individual interviews to gather facts.
6. All investigations will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible under the circumstances.
7. Once all the facts have been gathered, the coach will determine appropriate disciplinary action.
8. All decisions made by the coaching staff (Head Coach and Head Age Group Coach) and YMCA Senior Management are final.
9. All investigations will take place as quickly as possible from when the report was made.

10. Upon conclusion, all decisions and determined action will be kept strictly confidential and shared only with those the complaint was made against, the Head Coach and the Head Age Group Coach.

Procedure for Infraction Discipline

When applicable, the athlete will be dismissed from the practice or event immediately and a note will be sent to the parent. A meeting with the parent(s), Head Coach and Head Age Group Coach will be required before the athlete can return to the team. Depending on the severity of the infraction, YMCA Senior Management may be involved. During this meeting, the final disciplinary action will be determined, agreed to and documented.

If an infraction occurs, the following actions may be taken:

First Infraction

- Probationary period of 1-2 months if non-compliant with a Code of Conduct General Policy
- Probationary period of 6-12 months if non-compliant with a Code of Conduct Prohibited Behavior
- Possible suspension of team activities for up to 2 months. Parents will still be responsible to fulfill their work commitment at the conclusion of the suspension period.

Second Infraction of Same Nature

- Suspension from team activities for up to 3 months, if infraction occurs during probationary period
- Suspension from team activities for 1 month, if infraction occurs after probationary period

Third Infraction of Any Type

- Excused from Swim Team with no refund of team or meet fees

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social Media tools and technology are ever-evolving. Our Social Media Policy provides helpful, practical advice in an effort to protect the reputation and privacy of Somerset County YMCA and Swim Team coaches, athletes and families. While this policy may seem comprehensive; it should be noted that our policy is general and is not limited to what is stated within this document.

Social Networks

Social networks are online communities typically comprised of people with the same interests and/or activities. Social networks provide a means of communication through email, instant messaging, video, blogs, etc. Social network sites include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, WhatsApp, and many more.

Privacy

Although some sites may offer privacy settings, you should be aware that the internet is a public domain. Everything written or displayed on the Web can be traced back to its author. You should be mindful that any comments, videos, pictures or other information you post on the internet may be seen by members of the YMCA community and could reflect poorly upon your character or upon the YMCA.

Somerset County YMCA regards social networks as a new and noteworthy form of communication. As a member of Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team, we expect all who participate in social media to understand and follow these guidelines:

General Guidelines

- You are personally responsible for content published on blogs and other forms of user-generated media (e.g. YouTube). Make sure this content reflects you and the YMCA in a positive light.
- Identify yourself when possible and, if relevant, your role at Somerset County YMCA when you discuss YMCA related matters. Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself (by using first person) and not on behalf of Somerset County YMCA. When posting content to a personal social media site not related to Somerset County YMCA, please add a content disclaimer such as "Unless otherwise noted, the views expressed are mine alone and not those of Somerset County YMCA."
- Respect content, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
- Do not provide any confidential or private information about Somerset County YMCA, its employees or its members and guests.
- Do not cite or reference members, guests, partners, employees or suppliers without their prior written approval. A child (i.e., anyone who has not reached legal age and cannot be considered an adult) cannot give their approval.
- Do not post pictures or videos of team members or guests enrolled in Somerset County YMCA events, programs or participating in activities at the YMCA, especially those of children.
- Do not use the YMCA or Swim Team logo or any other pictures affiliated with Somerset County YMCA or the National YMCA. This includes images of the YMCA and Swim Team logo on clothing in pictures or videos.
- Respect your audience. Do not use derogatory or obscene language, personal insults, or any language or behavior that would be otherwise unacceptable at the YMCA. Be respectful of other's privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable (such as politics or religion).
- Use good judgment. There are always consequences to the content you post. Proofread everything you post and if it seems questionable or makes you feel uncomfortable, reread this policy or discuss it with your practice group coach or a Parent Board member.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY*

Purpose

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Swim Team, the "Club", and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or parent.

Objectives of the Club's Bullying Policy and Action Plan

1. To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board members, coaches, parents and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make all parents, swimmers, STPO and coaching staff aware of the Club's policy and protocols regarding incidents of bullying.
4. To explain how incidents of bullying should be reported to the Club.
5. To spread the word that the Club takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

What is Bullying?

Consistent with the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, our Swim Team prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress. The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
2. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
4. infringing on the rights of the other member at any Swim Team activity; or
5. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any Swim Team activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member Club or Local Swimming Committee (LSC)).

Reporting Procedure

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents
- Talk to a Club coach or STPO Member
- Write a letter or email to the Club coach or STPO Member
- There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the Swim Team leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

How We Handle Bullying

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we stop bullying on the spot using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved
3. Make sure everyone is safe
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene

If bullying is occurring at our Club or it is reported to be occurring at our Club, we address the bullying by finding out what happened and supporting the kids involved using the following approach:

Finding out What Happened

1. First, we get the facts.
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - c. Listen without blaming.
 - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
 - e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.
2. Then, we determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - What is the history between the kids involved?
 - Have there been past conflicts?
 - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
 - Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

Supporting the Kids Involved

3. Support the kids who are being bullied
 - a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
 - b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
 - iii. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.
4. Address bullying behavior
 - a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
 - b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
 - c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone who is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
 - d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
 - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.
 - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
 - e. Avoid strategies that don’t work or have negative consequences:
 - i. Zero tolerance or “three strikes, you’re out” strategies don’t work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying

- behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
- ii. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
 - f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.
5. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.
- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
 - b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or Club STPO;
 - c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."
 - d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
 - e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

*Source: USA Swimming

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY*

Purpose

The Swim Team (the "Club") recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

General Content

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection. For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- drugs or alcohol use;
- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- the adult's personal life , social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- **Note:** Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, STPO member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the STPO, or other athletes?" With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member. If your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

Facebook, Instagram, Blogs and Similar Sites

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend." A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Facebook chat or other IM method. The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

Twitter Best Practice

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "direct message" each other through Twitter.

Texting

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. EMAIL Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

*Source: USA Swimming

ATHLETE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

Purpose

Athletes should be made aware that there are certain standards for electronic communication for all individuals associated with the team. The ability of coaches and non-athlete members to adhere to the required policy relies, in part, on the ability of athletes to respect the boundaries established for healthy electronic communication with the team. Athletes should remember that swimming for the team is a privilege, and they are expected to portray themselves, their team, and their community in a positive manner at all times.

Expectations

The Swim Team holds the following expectations of athletes:

- Athletes should not use derogatory language, including sexist, racist, homophobic, obscene, or profane material of any kind.
- Athletes will not use social media to degrade, demean, or attack any person, team, or organization.
- Athletes will not use social media to contact his/her coaches and will instead post appropriate material to the team's profile.
- Athletes will not call or text their coach, except in an emergency or if a parent/guardian is included in the communication.
- All communication between athletes and coaches will be related to the activities of the team and should, whenever possible, be limited to in-person communication during team practices or events.

Things to remember: Texting

- Text messages and photos can be saved or screen-shot. Once the message is transmitted, the sender does not have control.
- Texting between athletes and coaches is not okay unless it is an emergency situation or another adult is copied on the text.
- It is typically more effective to discuss an issue in person.

Things to remember: Social Media

- Once you post something online, it is public and permanent – even if you delete it.
- Many employers, college admissions officers, and athletic recruiters review social networking sites as part of their evaluation of an applicant. Carefully consider how others may perceive the information and content that you share about yourself.
- Never post your email address, home address, phone number, or other personal information, as it could lead to unwanted attention, stalking, or identity theft.

LOCKER ROOM POLICY

In an effort to ensure a comfortable and safe facility/locker room environment for the athletes, please remember the following:

- You are representing Somerset Hills YMCA at all times while in practice or at a meet
- Somerset Hills YMCA athletes share the facility/locker room with all members of the Y
- Facility/locker room rules and regulations are posted and are expected to be followed at all times
- Neither the YMCA nor the coaching staff is responsible for an athlete's personal belongings. All athletes are expected to secure their belongings in the lockers provided.

In the event that a Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team athlete has been identified as failing to obey facility/locker room rules and regulations and/or is behaving in a manner that does not reflect positively on the team, the following actions will be taken:

- The athlete and/or training group will be warned that their behavior is unacceptable
- Failure to correct the behavior will result in the suspension of facility/locker room use
- Length of suspension will be determined by Somerset Hills YMCA staff
- Parent volunteers may be asked to monitor the facility/locker room to ensure that the issues have been resolved
- If the facility/locker room issues are unable to be resolved, permanent suspension may result

As a Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team athlete or parent, you are required to **immediately report** to the coaching staff any rule violations and/or inappropriate behavior by an athlete

or YMCA member. The coaching staff will then work with the parent, athlete and YMCA staff to resolve the problem.

YOUTH SUPERVISION POLICY

Somerset Hills YMCA is a branch of Somerset County YMCA. Somerset County YMCA places a high priority on the safety of members and program participants. For the purposes of this youth policy, "YOUTH" is defined as children ages 10 and under.

- While present in all Somerset County YMCA facilities and program sites, all children ages 10 and under must either be attending a YMCA program or accompanied by a parent or guardian at least 18 years of age.
- During open gym and open swim, parents/guardians of children ages 10 and under must be present in the room and supervising their children. The parent/guardian must be in appropriate bathing attire in the natatorium with their children ages 7-10 during open and family swim. Parents must be in the water (appropriately attired) within arms-reach of children ages 6 and under.
- All children ages 17 and under must have current emergency contact telephone number(s) and name(s) on file with the Member Service Desk.
- Parents/guardians of swimmers ages 10 and under are responsible for delivery to the instructor (at the start) and pick up from the room (immediately at the end) of their child's class/program.

Swim Team Specific Policy

- Parents/guardians must sign out all swimmers ages 10 and under on the sheet posted on the glass window between Engelhard and Chandor pools.

REFUND POLICY

When you register for the swim team, this reserves a space for your child on the team and we staff according to the registrations. If you decide that you would like to leave the team before the season is over, we do require written notification and will adhere to the following cancellation schedule:

- **August 1 – September 12:** YMCA will refund 75% of the total swim team fee
- **September 13 – October 13:** YMCA will refund 50% of total swim team fee, excluding the September payment
- **October 14 – November 14:** YMCA will refund 25% of the total swim team fee
- **November 15 and later:** YMCA will not refund any portion of the swim team fee

Medical refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Medical documentation will be required.

PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

Purpose

There has been much talk about whether it is safe to have images taken of children participating in sports. While the great majority of images are appropriate and are taken in good faith, it is a fact that images can be misused and children can be put at risk if common-sense procedures are not observed.

Policies

1. The publishing of a photograph of a swimmer under age 18 either on a notice board or in a published article or video recording (including video streaming) of swimming competitions should only be done with parents' consent.
2. A parent or guardian has the right to refuse to have children photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal cannot be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming

competition. Therefore, any photo that may go to press or on a notice board, be it through a member of the Y Program Staff or official photographer, should receive parental consent before publishing/displaying the photo, preferably in writing.

In the case of open meets and other competitions where the host club has an official photographer present, all parents attending should be made aware of this in the meet information/webpage. If photos are to be published anywhere, the individual parents should be given the opportunity to withhold their consent. Their right to do so should be specifically drawn to their attention.

All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency, in particular:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualized image in a sporting context.
- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swim suit.
- Photographs should not be taken from behind swimming blocks at the start of a race or exhibit a child climbing out of the swimming pool.
- Photographs should not be taken in locker rooms or bathrooms.

PHOTOGRAPHIC AND AUDIO/VISUAL RELEASE

I, being 18 years of age or older and if not my Parent/Guardian has also signed below, hereby give permission and consent to YMCA & Affiliates to make incidental and occasional photographic, audio and video recordings in connection with participation in YMCA activities or programs and to utilize the same in any manner, and without any compensation to, and/or claim by me, my family or guests.

Parent/Guardian (print) _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Swimmer Name _____ Date _____

Swimmer Signature _____

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA SWIM TEAM 2017-2018 REGISTRATION FORM

We are pleased that you have decided to join Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team. This handbook outlines important information for swimmers and parents. Please familiarize yourself with the handbook in its entirety. Please acknowledge the following by signing below:

- I acknowledge that the swim team coaching staff strongly recommends each athlete has an annual physical. An annual physical is required for all National level swimmers as per YMCA Nationals Policy.
- I acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to have regularly-scheduled physicals for their swimmers and to communicate any and all medical and behavioral conditions/issues (including pre-existing) in their health records immediately to the head coach in written format, including email.
- I acknowledge that in the event that a parent/guardian cannot be reached in an emergency, permission is granted to the swim team coach and the physician selected to take whatever action is deemed medically necessary in the child's best interest.
- I acknowledge that the swimmer is not currently representing any other YMCA or USA Swimming team.
- I acknowledge that failure to pay charges or fines will result in swimmer(s) associated with the account being prohibited from entering swim meets and from registering for future seasons, until paid in full.
- I acknowledge that swimmer's birth date is correct in Team Unify.
- I acknowledge that the primary email address in Team Unify will be used for communications. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that contact information is correct and up to date at all times. Should a fine result from missing communications due to incorrect contact information on file, the parent/guardian will be responsible for that fine.
- I acknowledge and agree to adhere to the Swim Team Code of Conduct in its entirety.
- I acknowledge and agree to adhere to the Swim Team Parent Volunteer Commitment Guidelines.
- Changes or updates to the Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team Handbook will be distributed via email and/or posted on the swim team website, www.shyswimteam.org.

I acknowledge receipt and understanding of the Somerset Hills YMCA Swim Team Handbook. I acknowledge that I have read or will read this handbook, and I accept full responsibility for familiarizing myself with the entire contents of this handbook.

Parent/Guardian (print) _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Swimmer Name _____ Date _____

Swimmer Signature _____